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EDUCATION WEEK

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Textbook Rules Have Backfired, Report Contends

Says Policies 'Drained The Life' From Prose

By Robert Rothman

WASHINGTON—State policies aimed at improving school textbooks have, in fact, destroyed the quality of the books and made it nearly impossible for good ones to be produced and sold, the Council for Basic Education charged last week.

"The harder [state officials] try to regulate the content of textbooks," concludes a report released by the council, "the less useful textbooks become for their own students and students elsewhere in the country."

This problem has had profound effects on children's learning and love for reading, according to the report's author, Harriet Tyson-Bernstein, a senior research associate for the council.

"Much of what is in the textbooks is incomprehensible to me," she said at a press

Continued on Page 22

Pam Price/The Hartford Courant

Harriet Tyson-Bernstein

Big-City Gang Culture Spreading to New Turf

By Debra Viadero

The puzzling telephone calls began flooding the offices of community groups in Portland, Ore., last spring.

Parents were calling to report that their children had been beaten up by other youngsters for wearing red clothing. Residents were complaining that bands of teen-agers were harassing them and running drug operations out of rented houses.

Then graffiti, bearing the insignia of California street gangs, began to appear on fences and buildings.

The cause of the disturbances soon became clear: For the first time in the memory of police and community officials, Portland had a "gang problem."

That problem was dramatically illustrated this month in Los Angeles, a city long known as the nation's "gang capital." Police in that city, attempting to stem a tide of gang-related murders, conducted a

Continued on Page 18

David Leeson

Dallas officer with youths caught recently in "crack house."

Enrollment Decline in Los Angeles Tied to New U.S. Immigration Law

By Lisa Jennings

School officials in the Los Angeles area say they are seeing the impact of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 in a sharp drop in enrollments from projected levels for this year. And they say they are anticipating steeper declines next year.

Throughout Los Angeles and the surrounding county, where an estimated 40 percent of the nation's illegal immigrants live, only about 15,000 new students enrolled for this school year. More than 38,000 new enrollees were anticipated, according to county and city officials.

In a new report, school officials cite as the reason for the drop what Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools Stuart E. Gothold calls the "immigration amnesty hypothesis." Mr. Gothold speculates that families uncertain about their chances for qualifying for permanent residency may be leaving the country or pulling their children out of school until they are more sure of their status.

"Of the reasons why these students are not enrolling, fear is high on the list," said Bob Grossman, a spokesman for the Los Angeles County schools. "Fear of deportation, and fear that their families will be broken apart." Many immigrant students

Continued on Page 15

Bennett Is Urged To Probe 'Dumbing Down' of Tests

By Robert Rothman

John Jacob Cannell, the West Virginia physician whose controversial study found that most students score above the average on normed achievement tests, has raised new questions about two widely used assessments.

In a letter sent this month to U.S. Secretary of Education William J. Bennett, Dr. Cannell charges that the California Achievement Test and the Stanford Achievement Test may have been "dumbed down" over the past decade.

Like his earlier findings, contained in a report last December, Dr. Cannell's new conclusions are based on his own research, and have drawn cautious responses from a number of academic experts.

The degree of difficulty in the reading-comprehension section of the 1985 CAT for 2nd and 3rd graders was a full grade level below that of the 1977 test, Dr. Cannell contends.

In addition, he states, an analysis of the Stanford test administered to 4th and 5th graders showed a "profound drop in expository-reading difficulty" between 1972 and 1982.

"If this is true," he writes, "it will have profound effects on the reading proficiency of American schoolchildren for years to come."

"Teachers use these tests to evaluate grade-level reading ability," he added in an interview last week. "These tests present a false reassurance of reading abilities."

Dr. Cannell suggested that the findings may help explain the seemingly "anomalous" results of the 1986 reading test of the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Those results, which showed inexplicably large drops in performance between 1984 and 1986, may in fact reflect actual declines in student abilities, he said.

Kathleen A. Bursley, vice president and counsel for Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc., the firm that publishes the Stanford test,

Continued on Page 22

Pesticides in Schools: Focus Shifting From Indifference to Concern

By Ellen Flax

Three years ago, whenever janitors or outside contractors used pesticides at her school, Faith Glerum, then a 5th grader, became very ill.

For two days after each application, her mother reports, the Glen Ridge (N.J.) Middle School pupil would get red blotches on her face, swollen ears, and a sore throat. And when janitors applied an extra dose of the pesticide diazinon to rid the school of roaches, she says, Faith lost her sense of balance.

Several years and countless arguments with school officials later, Gigi Glerum is still demanding that the officials provide a pesticide-free environment for her "chemically sensitive" daughter, now enrolled in another school district.

Ms. Glerum, along with other parents, school employees, and environmental activists nationwide, maintain that schools have become the unlikely dumping ground for highly toxic chemicals that have not been adequately tested by the Environmental Protection Agency for their potential health effects.

These critics have been joined by a growing number of federal, state, and local officials in arguing that the public, including school personnel, does not realize that pesticides have not been deemed entirely "safe" by the E.P.A., and that chemicals are frequently applied by individuals ignorant of their toxicity.

For those reasons, the critics say, pesticide use should be severely restricted around children, who have more vulner-

Continued on Page 20

Also in the news

Quakers Contemplate Mission of Schools
In an era of competition, they ponder traditional values of cooperation, social action, and peace.
7

California Teachers Resist Acting as Nurses
Their union is lobbying for a bill that would prohibit them from providing medical services.
10

U.S. Language Center Is Slated To Close
A center on education for disadvantaged children will replace it, federal officials say.
14

IN SUMMARY

'Ambivalence' About Teachers
The massive quantity of recent state initiatives to upgrade the teaching force reflects an "acute ambivalence" among policymakers about teachers' proper status, a new report suggests. **Page 4.**

Promoting Local Support
A five-year project has succeeded in garnering new grassroots support for education through the creation of local school foundations in some 50 cities, an evaluation of the effort concludes. **Page 4.**

Science and Policymaking
A new, nonpartisan panel of leaders from science, government, business, and academe will look at ways in which policymakers can make better use of scientific and technical information. **Page 5.**

A Guide to School Districts
A forthcoming "consumer guide" aimed at families moving to new communities provides statistical profiles and effectiveness ratings for some 500 school districts in 50 metropolitan areas. **Page 6.**

Electronic Tools for Learning
Schools should reduce the "paper-and-pencil" emphasis of mathematics classes and enhance pupils' "power" by using calculators and computers in all grades, a task force says. **Page 9.**

Chiefs' Views on NAEP
A panel representing the chief state school officers has issued recommendations on the content and reporting procedures for an expanded National Assessment of Educational Progress. **Page 10.**

A Revamped Statistics Center?
Legislation pending in the Congress would refashion the Education Department's statistics center into a largely autonomous agency modeled on other federal data-gathering bureaus. **Page 14.**

Commentary	32
Deadlines	25
Events	25
Federal File	14
Honors	25
Legislative Update	12
Letters	23
Marketplace	26
Partnerships	8
State Journal	10
Thinking About Education	23

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ACROSS THE NATION

NATIONAL

Andy Jackson? Rod Serling? No, Teacher of the Year

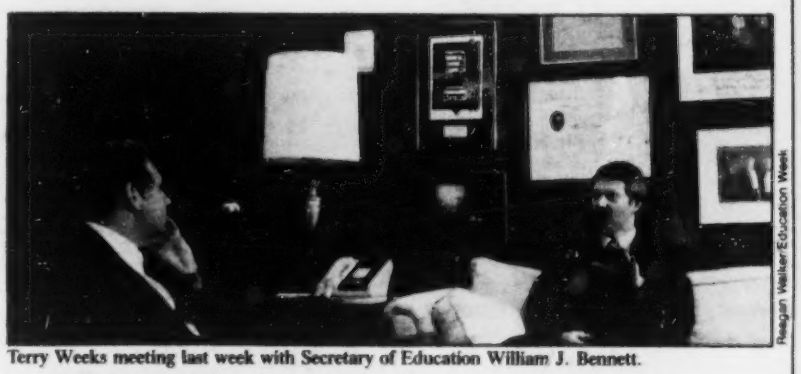
In his 7th-grade history classroom, he often assumes the identity of a historical figure, such as Andrew Jackson, or stages "Twilight Zone" episodes that allow students to recreate and alter an event from a bygone era.

Sometimes, his students pretend to be on the "Oprah Winfrey Show" as they discuss the nuances of a current event.

He is Terry Weeks, 37, the 1988 National Teacher of the Year.

Mr. Weeks, who teaches at the Central Middle School in Murfreesboro, Tenn., was in Washington last week to be honored at a number of ceremonies, including one in the Oval Office, at which President Reagan presented him with a crystal apple, the traditional symbol of teaching.

Mr. Weeks was chosen from among the nation's more than 2.5 million elementary and secondary public-school teachers for the 37th national teacher award.


Reagan Walker/Education Week

Terry Weeks meeting last week with Secretary of Education William J. Bennett.

The award is sponsored by Council of Chief State School Officers, the Encyclopaedia Britannica Companies, and Good Housekeeping magazine.

Beginning in June, Mr. Weeks will spend a year traveling across the country to speak before numerous professional and business groups and civic organizations.

G.E.D. Takers Earn Diplomas Despite Erroneous Scores

Because of a scoring error, about 640 students who failed to pass the revised General Educational Development examination this year have been awarded the certificate anyway.

The error resulted in scores "three to five points higher than they should have been," according to Douglas R. Whitney, director of the G.E.D. testing service. The program is administered by the American Council on Education in conjunction with state education departments.

About 6,400 test takers in 10 states—less than 1 percent of all those expected to take the test this year—received diplomas based on the erroneous scores, according to Mr. Whitney. But 90 percent of those diplomas would have been awarded in any case, he said.

In five other states and the District of Columbia, officials delayed reporting the results because of the error; in another four states, officials postponed administering the test for a month. The revised test, which is being phased in this year, for the first time requires those taking the high-school-equivalency exam to write an essay.

STATES

N.H. Panel Asks Why 40 Percent Of Those Certified Are Not Teaching

A committee established by the New Hampshire legislature is trying to find out why two-fifths of the state's 19,000 certified teachers are no longer teaching in public schools.

In questionnaires recently sent to 7,678 people who hold valid certifications but are not teaching in the state, the panel also asks what might entice them to return to the profession.

"I suspect many of them have no need or intention of working in public schools," said Gerald Daley, superintendent of the Dover Public Schools and chairman of the panel. "Some are out of state."

"But until we look at the numbers, we won't know," he said.

Mr. Daley added that raising teacher salaries may be a way to draw some teachers back into classrooms. With an average teacher salary of $22,011, New Hampshire currently ranks 42nd overall in the nation, according to the U.S. Education Department.

But teachers may also indicate that they would return to schools if districts offered child care or job-sharing opportunities, Mr. Daley said. "That's good information for districts to have," he said.

The panel—which includes representatives from the state House and Senate, the governor's office, the education department, and teachers', administrators', and school-board groups—was created by the legislature in 1987 to study the extent of New Hampshire's teacher shortage.

■ **The Oklahoma Supreme Court has let stand a lower-court decision limiting to $300,000 the Oklahoma City School District's liability** for a 1982 explosion that killed six people at a district school.

The April 5 decision involved a suit brought against the district by the families of five children who died and others who were injured in the explosion of a water heater at the Star Elementary School. The lower court ruled that the state's Political Subdivision Tort Claims Act limited the district's liability for the accident.

The lower court had held that a $300,000 payment from the district to the families relieved the district, its employees, and its insurance company of all liability.

■ **School districts in Pennsylvania are obligated to provide individualized programs for highly able students,** the state's supreme court has ruled.

The court's ruling last month that it was not enough for a district to place gifted students in enrichment programs upheld the position of two parents who sued the Bucks County Centennial School District in 1981.

The plaintiffs argued that their son needed accelerated instruction in reading and mathematics in addition to instruction as part of the school's enrichment program.

Lawyers for the school district maintained that providing individualized coursework for gifted students would be too expensive.

The high court's opinion, written by Justice John P. Flaherty, said that districts must provide individualized programs within their resources, but are not required to take such extraordinary steps as hiring individual tutors.

DISTRICTS

Nevada Judge Upholds Bans On Papers' Birth-Control Ads

A federal judge has upheld the right of school officials in Clark County, Nev., to prohibit student publications from carrying advertisements for birth-control services.

The April 5 ruling, by U.S. District Judge Roger Foley, relied heavily on the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Hazelwood School District* v. *Kulmeier*—a case that gave administrators broad authority to control student expression in school newspapers, theatrical productions, and other forums that are part of the curriculum.

The Nevada lawsuit was brought four years ago by a local Planned Parenthood clinic that offers birth-control services, pregnancy testing, and counseling. The organization filed suit against the school district after several principals banned or modified some of the clinic advertisements that had been appearing in student publications.

A national Planned Parenthood spokesman called the judge's ruling "very damaging." She said the organization had not yet decided whether to appeal the decision.

Parent Seeks Right To Have Her Child Schooled by Television

A Massachusetts woman is suing Wellesley High School for the right to have her daughter attend biology class by closed-circuit television because of an allergy condition.

Mary Ann Hickey claims in the state-court suit that her daughter, Laura, has a condition called "chemically induced immune dysregulation." Common chemicals used in biology class can cause rashes, dizzi-

Consumer Guide Rates Schools in 500 Districts

By Lisa Jennings

Next month, with the publication of *Public Schools U.S.A.*, families moving into any of 50 metropolitan regions of the country will for the first time be able to turn to a "consumer guide" to local schools.

The guide, which contains information on some 500 school districts, was compiled by Charles Harrison, former executive director of the Education Writers Association.

"People have had this kind of thing for years to help them decide where to send their kids to college," Mr. Harrison said. "Why shouldn't they have some kind of guide to schools as well?"

The guide provides a three-part evaluation: a statistical profile of each district for the 1985-86 school year, short comments about their schools from citizens in each community, and an "Effective Schools Index" rating developed by Mr. Harrison to allow for "at a glance" comparison.

"We have not tried to pick the so-called 'best' districts in an area," says the introduction to the 366-page soft-bound volume. "In the first place, what is best according to one set of standards may not be best in light of other standards. . . . We believe we offer enough information about each district to allow readers to judge what schools might best serve their needs."

'Lack of Good Information'

Real-estate officials said last week that they welcomed the guide because school quality is an extremely important factor to parents buying a new home. They also pointed out that businesses give high priority to the issue in deciding where to locate.

"There's a lack of good information out there," said David Hyatt, a spokesman for the Northern Virginia Board of Realtors, the largest board in the country. "It is not the realtors' role to evaluate schools, but we could refer clients to a book like this to make their own determinations."

But some superintendents whose districts were rated challenged the accuracy of the E.S.I. rating in assessing the quality of a school system, saying it could be misleading to parents.

'Where People Are Moving'

The information was collected by Mr. Harrison through a questionnaire sent last year to selected school districts.

To be included, a district had to have at least 2,500 students and be located within 25 miles of a major metropolitan area where, according to the author, "people are moving."

The questionnaire asked for statistics in 22 categories, including enrollment, salaries for beginning and experienced teachers, average level of teacher experience, standardized-test scores, and percentage of schools built before 1955.

All the statistics used, Mr. Harrison said, are those typically collected by districts for their own use or for reports to state agencies.

'Key Indicators'

Mr. Harrison said he derived the E.S.I. by selecting 10 "key indicators" from among the 22 statistics requested from each district and assigning to each a point value from 1 to 10, with 100 set as a perfect score.

The top 10 indicators include: average daily attendance, expense per pupil, dropout rate, college-admission-test scores, Advanced Placement courses, teacher-pupil ratios, counselor-student ratios, and number of students per music specialist in the elementary grades.

District officials who did not provide some statistics, or who misinterpreted the question Mr. Harrison asked, were assigned no points for that category.

A number of districts that fitted the author's criteria—including New York City, Boston, Detroit, and Kansas City, Mo.—did not respond at all and were not rated.

High and Low

Of those that supplied the statistics requested, the district with the highest E.S.I.—98—was Brighton, N.Y., an affluent suburb of Rochester. The lowest-rated district was in Oakland, Calif., which scored 13. The median score for the districts surveyed was 58.

Twenty of the 26 districts that scored 85 or higher were located in the Northeast. Seven of those were found in Nassau and Suffolk counties on Long Island.

"We were very pleased with the rating," said John R. Shafer, superintendent of the Brighton school district. "But I don't think the numbers prove that we're any better than anywhere else. In the comments, the book states that we have a lot of community involvement, and a strong community commitment to education, and I think that's more important."

Method Said Flawed

The Randolph County district outside of Greensboro, N.C., was given an E.S.I. rating of 12, but the book notes that some of the statistics were misinterpreted by the district officials filling out the questionnaire.

Superintendent George Fleetwood said his staff receives many questionnaires, and filled out Mr. Harrison's as a matter of "routine." It was not clear how Mr. Harrison intended to use the information, he added.

"I do not think [this book] is representative of the quality of our school system," the superintendent said. "There were several flaws in Mr. Harrison's approach."

"It is very difficult to compare school systems across the nation," he added. "The conditions and economic support structures vary greatly. It takes more interpretation than is available in this guide."

John A. Whritner, superintendent of Grosse Pointe, Mich., schools, which earned an E.S.I. rating of 77, said, "I have no problem with comparative ratings as long as I know what I'm being judged on. I don't know if these numbers are fair or not. But there are all kinds of factors that go into schooling where we don't have numbers to show how certain things effect children."

'Cavalier, Casual, or Sloppy'

Mr. Harrison said he expected a negative response from some districts that rated on the low end of the scale.

"Frankly, I was surprised at the cavalier, casual, or even sloppy way a number of the school districts responded to the questionnaire," he said, adding that a letter was included with the survey instrument clearly stating its purpose. "Maybe next time they'll be more careful."

But he conceded that the comments by members of the school community included in the district analysis provided a "more balanced picture" than the E.S.I..

Mr. Harrison said he planned to update the book's results every two years to keep statistics current.

Public Schools U.S.A. will be available by the end of April for $17.95. Its publisher is Williamson Publishing Co. of Charlotte, Vt.

District Rankings

The following school districts earned an "Effective School Index" rating of 90 or above:*

Brighton, N.Y.	98
Herricks, N.Y.	95
Bloomfield Hills, Mich.	93
Lynbrook, N.Y.	93
Upper Merion, Pa.	92
Fox Chapel Area, Pittsburgh, Pa.	92
Mt. Lebanon, Pa.	92
Port Washington, N.Y.	91
Elmhurst, Ill.	91
Morris, N.J.	90

The following school districts earned an E.S.I. rating of 20 or lower:

Randolph County, N.C.	12*
Oakland, Calif.	13
Hillsborough County, Fla.	14
Lincoln Park, Mich.	14
Fontana, Calif.	17*
District of Columbia	17*
Highland Park, Mich.	17
Chicago (K-12), Ill.	18
Baltimore, Md.	20*

* Indicates district misinterpretation of one or more statistics in the E.S.I. For each misinterpreted statistic, a score of 0" was given instead of a possible score of 0 to 10 points.

Study Cites 32 Programs as Effective in Boosting Literacy

By Julia Woltman

A new national study has identified 32 local programs as especially effective in boosting literacy skills for 10- to 15-year-olds.

The three-year "Project on Adolescent Literacy," conducted by the center for early adolescence at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, examined efforts by school districts and community agencies to combat illiteracy in that age group. Its purpose was to learn what programs were successful and why, according to Judith Davidson, the center's project director.

Despite the pervasiveness of the problem, Ms. Davidson said, fewer than 350 programs nationwide were recommended to project researchers as "successful."

Of that number, she said, researchers determined on the basis of telephone interviews and questionnaire responses that 50 programs met the center's criteria of being "academically effective and developmentally responsive."

The researchers further narrowed the list to 17 school programs, 9 after-school programs, and 6 summer literacy programs—all of which were studied in site visits.

In-depth case studies of 8 of those 32 successful programs will appear in a book, *Adolescent Literacy: What Works and Why*, scheduled for release this summer by Garland Publishing Inc.

By publicizing outstanding programs, said Ms. Davidson, the researchers hope to provide a chance for teachers to "look at what colleagues who have tried new ideas are doing."

Program Ingredients

Although the scarcity of good adolescent-literacy programs is a matter of concern, the study concluded, evidence from the school- and community-based programs visited suggests that most students with poor skills can improve them through properly designed activities.

Successful literacy efforts share several essential ingredients, according to the researchers.

The most important of these, they found, is requiring students to engage intensively in reading and writing.

In addition, they found, students must have access to materials and to experienced readers and writers, and teachers must infuse non-readers with the confidence and motivation to read.

"Successful programs engage students who have been alienated from reading and build self-esteem by showing them that they can become successful learners," said Ms. Davidson.

The researchers noted that public libraries could play a vital role in promoting adolescent literacy. They found, however, that as of 1985, no public libraries were sponsoring adolescent-literacy programs.

Although the situation has improved slightly since then, Ms. Davidson said, there is "clearly a need for improved library services to the [adolescent] age group as a whole and to young adolescents with literacy problems in particular."

A natural route for libraries, Ms. Davidson suggested, would be for "young-adult librarians to work out collaborations with community organizations that know how to work with and reach young people."

8 Model Programs

Following are brief descriptions, along with names and telephone numbers of contact persons, for the eight programs that will be featured in the center's forthcoming book:

Chapter 1 Program, The Kenosha Model: Academic Improvement Through Language Experience, Kenosha (Wis.) Unified School District; Tom Zuhlke, director, (414) 656-6378. The program is founded on the belief that children will develop literacy in English if the instruction they receive is based on their own interests and experiences. It seeks to build students' confidence by focusing on their achievements and downplaying their weaknesses.

High Intensity Language Training, El Paso (Tex.) Independent School District; Luis Nieto, coordinator, (915) 779-3781. The program takes a "whole language" approach, integrating reading, writing, speaking, and listening. It emphasizes the cognitive and academic language skills needed in the classroom, as well as the conversational and functional skills needed in society.

Chapter 1 Program, STAR: Structured Teaching in the Areas of Reading and Writing, Community School District 4, New York City; Camille Aromondo, director, (212) 860-5905. The program is based on research that divides reading instruction into three categories: pre-reading, reading, and post-reading. Writing is viewed as an extension of reading, and teachers work to develop students' understanding of the connection between the two skills.

The Friendly Place, sponsored by the American Reading Council, New York City; Julia Palmer, director, (212) 619-6044. The Friendly Place is a community literacy center serving all ages through a combined library-bookstore and special programming. After-school activities designed to appeal to adolescents include a "rap" group and clubs that use students' literacy skills in exploring areas of special interest. The center offers a wide selection of books for early adolescents.

Montgomery Ward-Cabrini Green Tutoring Program, Chicago; Daniel Bassill, director, (312) 467-4980. A partnership between business and the community in which volunteers provide individualized tutoring one night a week to children from the Cabrini Green Housing Project. The program works with many students who are at risk of academic failure, and aims to give them the encouragement they need to continue and succeed in school. Tutors provide homework help and academic support.

Highline Indian Tutoring Center, Seattle; Cathy Ross, director, (206) 433-2266. The center provides after-school academic help to young descendants of the 66 American Indian tribes in the Seattle area. It uses high-school and college students as tutors, and focuses specifically on aiding students who are in danger of academic failure because of low reading achievement.

Cross-Age Tutoring Program of the Literacy Council of Alaska, Fairbanks; Riki Sipe, executive director, (907) 456-6212. This six-week summer reading program trains 14- to 21-year-old students with reading problems to tutor 5- to 19-year-olds with reading problems. Tutors, who come from low-income families and have juvenile-court records or are under foster care, are assigned to students who are at least three years below their own reading level. The tutors receive training in effective instructional approaches and basic job and living skills.

"Adventures in Excellence," New Orleans; Rose Drill-Peterson, director of information and community services, (504) 286-2847. The New Orleans Public Schools and community organizations sponsor this five-week summer program, which students attend voluntarily. Participants spend the morning on language-arts activities, and can select from an array of electives in the afternoon. Students engage in imaginative reading activities, journal writing, and reciprocal teaching.